

# The Cary Arboretum



of The New York Botanical Garden

A Newsletter published for Friends of the Arboretum  
by the Public Affairs Department.

January-February, 1981

Box AB  
Millbrook, N.Y. 12545

Volume VII Number 1

## In This Issue:

Plant Study Tour  
Agriculture Award  
Caucasus Mountains and Beyond

Staff Honors Volunteers  
Winter Courses for Everyone  
Christmas Plants Re-Bloom  
As the Crow Flies

Members' Trip to Boston  
People at the Arboretum  
Around the Arboretum  
At the Garden

## Plant Study Tour of England and the Republic of Ireland

A private showing on the first day of the Chelsea Flower Show, tours of London, visits to nearly 30 gardens and estates such as the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Bunratty Castle, the Japanese Garden at Tully, Powerscourt, and Mount Usher are just a few highlights included in an 11-day plant study tour to England and the Republic of Ireland scheduled for May 17-28.

Sponsored by the New York Botanical Garden Cary Arboretum and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the tour will be led by Arboretum Horticulturist Robert Hebb. Space is reserved for 12-15 Cary Arboretum members and friends.

The tour will include a visit to Sissinghurst Castle in Sussex, England. Known for its garden of the late Sir Harold Nicolson and his wife Vita Sackville-West, it is a study of subtle groupings of plants for architectural form and color.

In Ireland, the group will visit Glasnevin, the

National Botanic Garden of the Republic of Ireland. Glasnevin has glorious herbaceous borders, a fine rock garden, and very interesting collections under glass. Also, Birr Castle Demense will be visited — one of the finest gardens in Europe, it includes formal knot and box gardens, a river garden and arboretum.

Blarney Castle, shopping at the Waterford Glassworks, the Isle of Garnish, gardens and scenery of the beautiful Ring of Kerry, castles, cathedrals, ruins and walks in the glorious Irish countryside, are among some of the sights and visits planned. Ample time for shopping, theater and independent dining in London and Dublin are included.

For a detailed itinerary and further information about this tour, please contact Mrs. Janice Claiborne, (914) 677-5343. As we expect enthusiasm to be high, please indicate your interest as soon as possible.

## Agriculture Award

The United States Department of Agriculture, in recognition of the Arboretum's important contributions to forestry and conservation, has presented an award to the New York Botanical Garden Cary Arboretum for its work with urban trees, forestry studies, and woodlot management training.

According to Mr. Richard Watt, Urban Forest Specialist for the northeast U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, located in Broomall, Pennsylvania, the Cary Arboretum was one of 15 recipients of similar awards, selected from public and private organizations throughout 20 states.

Praised as a leader in the national promotion of urban forestry was Arboretum Evolutionary Botanist and Assistant Director Dr. Thomas Elias, who helped launch necessary legislation on a national level. Other contributions by Dr. Elias include his urban

(continued on page 2)

## The Caucasus Mountains and Beyond

by Robert S. Hebb, Horticulturist

Early last May, an event of historical importance quietly took place well removed from the limelight of publicity or discussion which normally attends other spring events at the Arboretum. Along with several members of the horticulture staff, I had the satisfaction of seeing the very first plants raised from our five-year-old Soviet Botanical Exchange Program transplanted from the nursery to their permanent grounds site in the Cherry Collection along Fowler Road.

These young trees, amongst several hundred plants we have collected in such exotic places as the Tien Shan, Altai, Sian or Hissar Mountains were brought back in 1976 as a small package of seeds obtained in the southern Caucasus Mountains by Dr. Thomas Elias during the Arboretum's first Soviet expedition. Since then, the greenhouse and nursery staff has spent much time carefully

growing and watching the progress of what has become the largest living collection of Russian plants outside the U.S.S.R. In the life of a tree, five years may seem a short time, but to those who have watched and cared for it daily, progress often seems slow indeed. For us, transplanting to the grounds thus represents a milestone in our efforts to establish new plants of potential horticultural and research value in the Arboretum's rapidly expanding collection.

Many questions related to Arboretum plantings raced through my mind as I boarded an Aeroflot jet headed for Moscow last August. Would I see plants of *Prunus divaricata* in the wild corresponding to those we had recently planted near Fowler Road? If so, are they really all that different from

(continued on page 2)



Photo: P. Keese

One of the most unforgettable scenes encountered in the mountains were entire slopes of alpine rhododendron (*R. caucasicum*) in full bloom.



## Caucasus Mountains and Beyond

(continued from page 1)

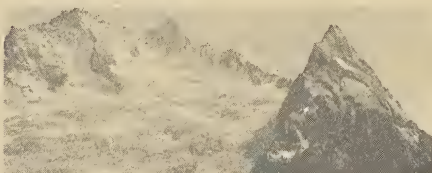
*Prunus sogdiana* which I collected four years ago in the Central Asian mountains and observed to produce luscious fruits of many colors there? Would these plants be useful new additions to American gardens? Could I bring more back for additional testing and study, and would it be possible to collect seeds of the beautiful alpine flowers of the Caucasus Mountains I observed three years ago, but could not obtain because I was there too early in the season?

The Soviet and American governments both agree that the botany program coordinated for the U.S. by the Cary Arboretum is amongst the most successful of the several research exchanges conducted each year between our two countries. As the leader of the only American research delegation to visit the Soviet Union in a period of political tension last summer, I wondered what, if anything, it would be possible for us to accomplish.

My two comrades on the trip had similar aspirations and questions. Dr. Richard Weaver of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University shared my desire to collect seeds and herbarium specimens of important trees for collaborative study at Cary and Arnold. Dr. Fred Seaman, Director of the Harding Laboratory of NYBG in the Bronx, wished to collect members of the daisy family as part of his program to discover additional

useful chemical compounds known to exist in wild Eurasian relatives of this common garden plant.

Our highest hopes were confirmed upon arrival in Moscow where we were met by friends and colleagues of the Main Botanical Garden and briefed on an itinerary which was to include five weeks of travel, collecting and study in some of the choicest areas of the Northern Caucasus Mountains, and a boat trip down the Volga River to study the specialized flora which occurs there on limestone, chalk deposits and related forest and steppe areas.



*Collecting activities in the northern Caucasus Mountains brought us glorious alpine vistas.*

Photo: R. Hebb

For me, the most unforgettable part of the ensuing journey was the time spent in the magnificent Caucasus Mountains, daily climbing through beautiful fir and spruce forests to subalpine and alpine meadows within sight of Mt. Elbrus, the highest in Eurasia. We did, indeed, meet the cherry trees we had come to study along with many others of potential importance for our collections. The fabulous and rare Caucasian Rhododendron (*Rhododendron caucasicum*) with its large white flower tresses on dwarf

plants only two feet tall yielded great quantities of seed as did beautiful species of primrose, gentian, maple, birch, fir, spruce, and many others.

Aside from the seeds, botanical specimens and beautiful mountain views, the help provided by our Soviet colleagues in overcoming all obstacles provided other lasting memories. These range from pushing expedition vehicles up nearly impassible mountain roads, to the comradeship at meals around the fire of an alpine camp, to the frustrations calmly shared while stranded on a mountainside in the midst of freezing rain and pelting hailstones.

This is the special time of year when gardeners start to think about seeds to order and make plans for next spring's garden — always visualized now to be the best ever. The time is even more special for the horticulture staff of the Arboretum, as we sow the seeds of 300 different species collected in Russia last summer and also begin to distribute them to over 300 botanical institutions worldwide who cooperate in our exchange program.

Plan soon to visit the Arboretum's greenhouses in early spring, where you can share our excitement and see the hundreds of seedlings which will have germinated by then. It is quite probable that amongst these plants a new and valuable addition for our gardens may lurk. It will take several years of patient growing and observation to tell. However, if so, I will have the satisfaction of knowing that the strenuous climbs up those mountains were worth the effort.

## Arboretum Staff Honors Volunteers

Over 90 volunteers from surrounding Dutchess County communities were honored December fifth for their work in various Arboretum projects. Volunteer time totaled 4,944 hours of work in projects ranging from providing public tours through the solar building and greenhouse complex to tagging deer on the Arboretum grounds.

During the annual ceremony, Mrs. Pixie Williams of Millbrook received special recognition for her 547 hours of work in the



*Arboretum Director Dr. Willard Payne presents Mrs. Sally Gifford O'Brien with a certificate for her volunteer work in the Cary Gift and Plant Shop.*

Arboretum's herbarium. Throughout the year, Mrs. Williams was responsible for mounting, packaging and filing plant specimens from around the world. "With her help," said Arboretum Evolutionary Botanist Dr. Thomas Elias, "we have been able to open the herbarium as a valuable plant reference library for students and visiting botanists."

According to Arboretum Director, Dr. Willard W. Payne, "We were delighted to honor such a devoted, diversified group of people, which has worked closely with the Arboretum staff. Arboretum volunteers give not only hours of their time, but bring a contagious enthusiasm to all Arboretum department projects. We are truly grateful for this vital support, without which many activities would be impossible."

Inaugurated by Arboretum Coordinator of Education, Dr. Peter A. Dykeman, in early 1976, the volunteer program has increased substantially during the past two years due to the efforts of Mrs. Violetta Putnam of Staatsburg, who herself donated 217 hours to the Arboretum to help coordinate its volunteer activities.

Other volunteers who have donated more than 100 hours are Mr. Giacomo Ingenia, 212 hours; Mrs. Ruth Timm, 190 hours; Mrs. Winona Gray, 175 hours; Mrs. Ethel Howlett, 155 hours; Mrs. Elizabeth Stratton, 115 hours; Mrs. Lorraine Ramsey, 175 hours; Mrs. Violetta Putnam, 217 hours; Mrs. Rose Marie Gillin, 137 hours; Mrs. Dorothy Linde, 144 hours; Mrs. Elisa Mintiens, 105 hours; Mrs. Sally Gifford O'Brien, 151 hours; and Mr. Michael Schroeder, 118 hours.

## Winter Courses for Everyone

Outdoor and indoor winter courses for the creative and adventurous are open for registration at the Cary Arboretum's Gifford House Education and Visitor Center.

Courses offered in the season's education agenda include Botanical Nomenclature, January 29; Quilting, February 5; Energy Conservation and Solar Energy Considerations for the Homeowner, February 11; Reading the Winter Landscape, February 21; Winter Botany on Cross Country Skis, call for February date; and Beginners' Cross Country Skiing, offered in January.

Please call the Gifford House at (914) 677-5358 for more information.

## Agriculture Award

(continued from page 1)

street tree recommendations for Poughkeepsie and Peekskill, New York, and Milford, Pennsylvania. Dr. Elias was also instrumental in initiating a woodlot management training program on the Arboretum grounds as part of the Dutchess County CETA Program.

Dr. David Karnosky, Arboretum Forest Geneticist, was also honored for his studies of pollution tolerant trees and Dutch elm disease.

The Department of Agriculture award commemorates the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Forest Service.



# Christmas Plants: Re-blooming Schedules Vary

**Editor's note:** This article was reprinted from the column "Down to Earth," by Arboretum Public Relations Specialist Robin Parow-Place. "Down to Earth," published weekly on environmental subjects, can be found in copies of the Millbrook Round Table, Gazette Advertiser, Hyde Park Townsman, Pine Plains Register Herald, Pleasant Valley Voice, Lakeville (Connecticut) Journal, and the Millerton News.

Care of last year's Christmas plants will pay off in the years to come by giving attention to their needs for re-blooming. The following instructions, if followed closely, will allow you to "recycle" your holiday plants for enjoyment during the 1981 season, and for many future holidays.

## Poinsettias

After the blooms of a poinsettia fade in February or March, remove the flowers and cut the stems to six inches. Give the plant strong light, and in June, replant in a larger pot and plant outdoors in an area that will render direct sunlight during the day. The plant should be kept moist, and should not be exposed to temperatures below 60° F. at night. In late August, before bringing it indoors, wash the plant thoroughly with water and check for insect problems. From September 20 to December 1, keep the poinsettia in a totally dark place from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., giving strong window light during the day. By Christmas, you will have a new batch of Christmas blooms to enjoy throughout the holiday season.

## Christmas Cactus

Through January, keep the Christmas Cactus in a sunny location and keep evenly moist. Night temperatures should be about 60° F.

Allow the plant to rest from February through mid-March by providing cool temperatures (50 - 60° F) and stop watering completely. Beginning in mid-March, give the plant a sunny location. Water and fertilize about every two weeks.

After danger of frost in the spring, place the plant outdoors in semi-shade. In September, stop fertilizing and decrease watering. The buds will begin to form during October and November as a result of the cool temperatures, which are essential for proper bud formation. Give the plant full sun, and water every two weeks. After the buds form, bring the Christmas cactus indoors and water every three weeks. Buds and flowers of *Schlumbergera truncata* (Thanksgiving cactus) will form earlier.

## Cyclamen

An excellent plant for cool, energy-saving houses, cyclamen thrive at temperatures between 50-60° F. They require strong, indirect light or morning light, and a period of rest (low temperatures, no watering) from early spring through the summer months. During this period, store the plant in a cool, dark location, such as a garage, root cellar or basement.

In late August, bring the plant indoors, provide good east or west window light, and keep moist. It is not necessary to re-pot the cyclamen corm if there is at least a ½ inch space between the corm and the sides of the pot. As the plant begins to sprout, keep it in a cool, sunny location and fertilize with a high-phosphate fertilizer to promote flower buds. The cyclamen will begin to flower in about 10 to 12 weeks.

## People at the Arboretum



"Jessie," a black Labrador retriever puppy who is being trained by Jim on weekends and evenings.

Jim was first hired at the Arboretum as a carpenter's helper in September, 1977. In August, 1978, he undertook the role of tree pruner. "I was taught to climb trees by Arboretum pruner Allan Kling," he says. "The tree I learned on was a skinny oak with no branches," he laughs, "and it was hard to climb." Admitting he was frightened during that first try, he adds, "I really enjoy climbing — it's a wonderful feeling and nothing else is quite like it."

In September, 1980, Jim became the Arboretum's assistant mechanic. His background as a diesel mechanic in the navy, and as a mechanic at Barker's automotive department in New Paltz, helped prepare him for the varied needs of the Arboretum's automotive fleet.

Attending concerts, hunting, and vacationing at Lake George are among Jim's pastime hobbies.

He hasn't retired as a tree pruner, however. In his spare time, Jim prunes trees at Innisfree Gardens — the magnificent estate of the late Walter Beck in Millbrook.

Noel "Jim" Parry, Assistant Mechanic . . . A resident of Hyde Park, Jim is an ex-navy man who first started working on cars with his father at age twelve.

He and his wife, Debbie, who works for the Dutchess County Department of Human Resources, have two children, Tara, age seven, and Noel, two. A new addition to the Parry household is

# As the Crow Flies

What was sent up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, came down on the Arboretum grounds, giving a young student data to complete her experiment in the study of upper-air currents.

The student, Miss Margie Corbin of Center-ville Elementary School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was one of 82 sixth graders who launched weather balloons from their school site.

According to Miss Corbin's laminated note attached to the balloon remnant, "This balloon was launched from Lancaster on November 21, 1980. I would really appreciate it if you would let me know where and when it was found. Thank you very much."

The note, discovered by a deer hunter on the Arboretum grounds November 22, was given to Arboretum Director Dr. Willard Payne. Although it was impossible to guess exactly when the balloon landed, it obviously took less than 21 hours to reach the Arboretum.

The weather study was under the direction of sixth-grade teacher Mr. Donald Smith, who noted the enthusiasm with which the students approached this fourth annual balloon launch.

Soon after the twelve-inch party balloons were sent off, individual children began to receive letters from those who had found them. Responses came from Pleasant Valley and Wappingers Falls, New York; Convent Station, New Jersey; and Washingtonville, New York. One balloon was found near the Canadian border in Maine, and had traveled over 500 miles in less than 24 hours.

## Members' Trip to Boston Show

Friends of the Arboretum are invited to attend a special trip to the Boston Flower Show led by Arboretum Horticulturist Robert Hebb, March 14-15.

The trip will include accommodations March 14 at the Park Plaza Hotel in downtown Boston, an afternoon at the Boston Flower Show, cocktail party, an evening walk to see the highlights of the city, and dinner at Durgin Park.

On March 15, the group will tour Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University, which has the largest collection of woody plants in North America, and will return to Millbrook in the early evening.

The cost for the two-day trip is \$92.50 per person, and includes bus transportation to and from Boston, hotel accommodations based on a double occupancy, show admissions, cocktail party, tour admissions, a box lunch, and a \$25 tax deductible contribution to Cary Arboretum.

For further information call Mrs. Janice Claiborne (914) 677-5343. All reservations are on a first come, first served basis, and must be made by February 13, 1981.

Text and photographs by  
Robin Parow-Place



# Around the Arboretum

## Dr. Tillman Studies Mangrove Problem

A three-week long investigation to solve extensive coastal vegetation problems in Colombia was completed in mid-November by Arboretum Ecologist Dr. Robert "Gus" Tillman.

Dr. Tillman, working in conjunction with UNESCO (United Nations Environmental, Scientific and Cultural Organization), explored the coastal mangrove forest on the Isla de Salamanca, a Colombian National Park. The park, which has had serious vegetation problems over the past ten years, has become an island due to the construction of a canal which separates it from mainland. The canal became silted, causing an interruption of fresh water flow to the mangrove trees. In addition, a highway built near the area compounded the problem by cutting off drainage, leaving the mangrove forest to grow for years in a stagnant saline solution.

The forest, mostly consisting of *Avicennia nitida*, *Rhizophora mangle*, and *Laguncularia racemosa*, has slowly been dying off, and the concern for it by the Colombian government led to the UNESCO assignment given to Dr. Tillman, which, all totaled, exceeded 87,600 miles traveled by him for UNESCO and its MAB (Man and Biosphere) program last year.

In his recommendation to Colombia, Dr. Tillman noted the importance of restoring the flow of the canal and drainage under the highway. He also recommended that aerial photographs be taken frequently to monitor the area, and for comparison studies in the future.

Dr. Tillman recently returned from a worldwide assignment to assess irrigation systems in twenty countries, as well as an assignment in Mexico to study environmental conditions near a nuclear generating station at Laguna Verde, Vera Cruz.

## Deer in Excellent Condition

The annual deer hunt, practiced as part of the Arboretum's Wildlife Management

program, ended December 9 with a total of 71 deer taken.

A total of 50 hunters visited the grounds during the 23-day season, averaging greater than 1.4 deer each. Due to new state licensing rules, individual hunters were able to apply for an antlerless deer permit. In the past only "party permits" (groups of two or more hunters) could apply for a license to hunt antlerless deer. Thus, many individual hunters possessed permits to shoot one male and one female deer.

"The deer were found in excellent physical condition," reports Mr. Jay McAninch, Arboretum Coordinator of Wildlife Resources. "And we have noticed a trend toward more balanced herd conditions with relationships to native forage areas on the Arboretum grounds since the annual hunt began in 1976."

Arboretum Wildlife Research Assistant, Mr. Raymond Winchcombe, aided by volunteers, devoted countless hours to make the 23-day hunt go smoothly and efficiently.

## Amy King Promoted

Amy Harding King, previously the Arboretum's Assistant Business Manager, was promoted January first to Business Manager.

Mr. William Goldsmith, who held the title of Business Manager for the past five years, has requested part-time employment at the Arboretum, and currently serves as Assistant Business Manager.

## Bird Book One of Best

*The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds* by John K. Terres, recently released by Alfred A. Knopf in New York, has joined the circulating collection in the Cary Arboretum Library.

Mrs. Betsy Calvin, Arboretum Librarian, urges those dedicated to the study of birds to browse through this impressive, one-volume encyclopedia. "The information is extensive, the photographs of excellent

quality, and a useful 47-page bibliography is included for the readers' extra convenience," she says.

The book also includes information on bird behavior, flight, immigration and habitat.

Other books on wildlife, alternative energy, botany, horticulture, environmental art and ecology are available to Friends of the Arboretum. The library, located on the first floor of the Arboretum's solar heated Plant Science Building, is open weekdays, 9 a.m. to noon, 1 to 4 p.m. and Thursdays, 7 to 9 p.m.

## Special Thanks

... To Arboretum volunteers, friends and members who helped make the fourth annual holiday plant sale a success. The spring sale, scheduled for April 10 through 12, will include a plant care clinic April 11, and offers Arboretum friends an opportunity to bring ailing plants for consultations by the Horticulture staff.

## At the Garden

Thousands of poinsettias will grace the lovely Crystal Palace at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx through February, when the scene will change to the magnificent annual spring show February 14.

Along with the opening of the spring show will be a plant sale in the Museum Building's "Shop in the Garden." Cactus, orchids and floor plants will be specially priced, along with other items in the shop. For more information on events at the Garden, contact Robin Parow-Place, (914) 677-5343.

THE CARY ARBORETUM  
of  
THE NEW YORK  
BOTANICAL GARDEN

Box AB  
Millbrook, New York 12545

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Millbrook, N.Y.  
Permit No. 16